United States Department of Agriculture

North Savery Project

Final Environmental Impact Statement Summary

6th Principal Meridian
Townships 14, 15, and 16 North
Ranges 85, 86, and 87 West

Carbon County, Wyoming

Forest Service **Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland**
Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District **March 2018**

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If you have questions about how to identify new information or if you need assistance with this document, please contact the Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District at 307-326-5258.

North Savery Project
Final Environmental Impact Statement
Carbon County, Wyoming

Lead Agency: **USDA Forest Service**
Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland

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Changes from the draft to final environmental impact statement have been made to reflect our response to cooperating agency and public comments and to show updated analyses. New information has been added to make factual corrections, refine actions included in the final proposed action, consider two alternatives in response to public-suggested alternatives, and improve or expand analysis of adverse and beneficial effects. New information is indicated by bold text in the same format displayed by this paragraph.

Abstract: The Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, **has prepared** this final environmental impact statement in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), section 104 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. The district **proposes to authorize 6,484 to 6,834 acres of vegetation treatments including salvage logging, precommercial thinning, fuel reduction and hazard tree clearing on National Forest System lands in the North Savery project area. The district also proposes specific changes to the transportation system in the project area, including changing road maintenance levels, relocating roads to more sustainable locations, adding non-system routes to the road system, and decommissioning existing system roads that are impacting watershed and wildlife resources. The project decision would identify and designate the minimum road system in the project area in accord with Subparts A and B of the Travel Management Rule. Two alternatives are considered in detail in this final environmental impact statement: no action and a final proposed action responsive to additional resource surveys, analysis, and public comment. The final proposed action is the agency preferred alternative and is reflected in the draft record of decision.**

Submit objections to: **Objection Review Officer**
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
1617 Cole Blvd. Building 17, Lakewood, CO 80401
r02admin-review@fs.fed.us

Objections must be received by Monday, April 23, 2108.

Summary

This final environmental impact statement includes new information. Updates include factual corrections, refined project activities in the final proposed action, improved or expanded analysis of adverse and beneficial effects, and responses to cooperating agency and public comments. Bold text indicates new information.

The overall objective of the North Savery Project is to manage forest stands and the associated transportation system to restore future landscape resiliency by accelerating restoration of stands damaged by insects and disease, maintaining emergency access to and egress from National Forest System lands and inholdings, and restoring watersheds to a condition that would be more resilient to runoff and sedimentation during extreme conditions and events.

What is Being Proposed and Why

The Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, proposes to authorize **6,484 to 6,834** acres of vegetation treatments including salvage logging, precommercial thinning, hazard tree clearing **along a ditch, fencelines and timber access roads**, and **fuels reduction** on National Forest System lands in the North Savery Project Area. **Up to 24 miles of temporary roads would be needed to implement vegetation treatments.** The district also proposes specific changes to the **permanent** transportation system in the project area, including changing road maintenance levels, **relocating 1.5 miles of existing system roads to improve long term sustainability,** adding **7 miles of unauthorized** routes to the road system, and decommissioning 21 miles of system roads that are impacting watershed resources. **The final proposed action does not include the new off-highway vehicle trail included in the draft environmental impact statement modified proposed action.** The project decision would identify and designate the minimum road system in the project area in accord with Subparts A and B of the Forest Service Travel Management Rule. Two alternatives were considered in detail: no-action and **an iterative final proposed action responsive to additional resource surveys, updated analysis, and comments from cooperating agencies and the public**. The **final** proposed action is the agency preferred alternative **and is reflected in the draft record of decision**.

This action is needed because:

- Over the past decade, a mountain pine beetle epidemic has killed pine trees across thousands of acres of forest land in southern Wyoming. In lodgepole pine forests, approximately 70 percent of the trees greater than 6 inches in diameter are dead or dying from mountain pine beetle infestation. Management now will encourage growth of young, resilient trees in this area.
- Timber stands in the North Savery project area are among the most productive growing sites on the Medicine Bow National Forest, and it is a priority to reforest and return **stands in timber management areas to active production of desired merchantable species**.
- There is a limited time in which to salvage these trees and recover a sawtimber product, **after which, management costs are borne entirely by agency budgets versus being partially offset by receipts for timber value through commercial harvest.**
- Fuel breaks suitable for holding firelines and protecting values at risk do not exist in many parts of the analysis area.

- Standing dead trees create safety hazards for the public, Forest Service employees, **and other stakeholders**.
- A National Environmental Policy Act analysis and decision have not yet been made to designate the minimum road system for the North Savery project area to complete Subparts A and B of the 2005 Travel Management Rule.
- Some designated roads are contributing to degraded resource conditions on the Medicine Bow National Forest, including loss of vegetation, erosion, sedimentation to streams, reduced quality of wildlife habitat, and low resilience to extreme weather events. Road **relocation or** improvements, such as replacing failing culverts, are needed to maintain **a sustainable** transportation system.
- The Chief of the Forest Service and the Governor of Wyoming have identified this project location as a priority area for treatment due to insect and disease infestation.

Information has been added to the final environmental impact statement to display more clearly how each element of the final proposed action responds to the purpose and need for the North Savery Project.

Current Conditions in the Project Area

Several reviewers asked for stronger connection between existing conditions, current management activities, project purpose and need, and the proposed action for North Savery. Material in Chapter 1 (Project Development) and Chapter 2 (Proposed Action and Alternatives) have been improved in that regard.

The North Savery project area is located at the northern terminus of the Sierra Madre mountain range on the Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District, Medicine Bow National Forest. The project area is about 15 miles northwest of the town of Encampment in Carbon County, Wyoming.

Contiguous conifer forests and prevailing winds brought epidemic populations of mountain pine beetles and noticeable mortality to the project area beginning in 2004. Mountain pine beetle populations peaked in approximately 2009. Stand mortality reached a plateau about five years later as beetles depleted their food supply and **beetle populations** returned to more typical levels. As a result of bark beetle mortality, dead trees now dominate the view in many areas of the foreground and are visible in the middle and background.

Nearly all mature lodgepole stands include substantial amounts of standing dead timber, some as much as 90 percent dead. Spruce and fir stands are also being affected by insects and disease at smaller scales. **Deterioration of** mature aspen stands affected by a combination of age, weather, and mortality agents **is widespread, but local observations indicate weather cycles with normal precipitation support more rapid aspen recovery than considered earlier in this project.**

The North Savery project area is known for high timber productivity, as reflected in Forest Plan management area designation for timber production emphasis (Management Area 5.13) in 73 percent of the area. Virtually all suitable timber production sites are important for their near- and long-term contributions to the production of wood products to meet commitments to the timber industry made in the Forest Plan **(Forestwide Goal 2c1, Strategies a and b).** Most stands in the project area rate above average or superior for the volume of wood produced. However, available merchantable volume **now and in the future is** decreasing because of the impacts of the mountain pine beetle epidemic, weather, previous management, and other forest threats.

Timber program records indicate 8,867 acres have been harvested by a variety of methods since 1975, primarily in lodgepole pine stands. Approximately half of that harvest was by clearcutting and half by various partial harvest or thinning methods. Lodgepole stands harvested in the 1970s to 1990s now appear as pockets of green, vigorous growth in the remaining matrix of bark-beetle-killed lodgepole pine forest, and Error! Reference source not found. **was added to demonstrate that pattern. Many of the clearcut stands have regenerated so densely that precommercial thinning is now needed to maintain growth rates. Stands that were thinned or harvested in the past now demonstrate lower levels of bark beetle mortality than previously unmanaged stands. A reviewer requested additional information on the lack of vigor in North Savery project timber stands, and information has been added to the final environmental impact statement for clarification.**

In mature unmanaged stands, wind, snow, and ice continue to weaken and blow down dead trees, creating a landscape of jack-strawed lodgepole pine interspersed with regenerating forest. **Stands with higher mortality are conducive to lodgepole regeneration in the understory because more sunlight reaches the forest floor. Stands with less mortality are conducive to mixed conifer regeneration including spruce and fir because these species are more shade tolerant. Regeneration of any tree species contributes to values provided by future forest structure and composition. However, some species are better suited to attaining objectives for specific management emphases.**

For instance, multistoried understories are not desirable for reducing fuel loading. Although the risk of fire ignition is not influenced by bark beetle mortality, when human-caused or natural ignitions occur, observations during the recent Beaver Creek, Broadway, Snake, and Keystone Fires indicate current stand conditions are likely to result in fire behavior with increased rates of spread, fireline intensity, and risk to responders **under a wide range of weather scenarios. Existing and developing fuel profiles are strongly influenced by understory ladder fuels and high heavy fuel loading from overstory mortality.** These conditions **narrow the range of fire management and suppression tools available and** are not conducive to using fire in its natural role **or to** protecting firefighters and important values at risk. Almost half (48 percent) of the North Savery project area is inside a community at risk identified by Carbon County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan **(CWPP)**.[1] When areas within 1.5 miles of the communities at risk are considered, the area in or near communities at risk increases to 82 percent. **Identification of the communities at risk is considered a component of interagency and public collaboration for the North Savery project.**

Natural stream channel characteristics and past management impacts vary across the North Savery watersheds. In watersheds with erosive stream channels, the effects of increased erosion, deposition and water conveyance are more likely to adversely affect stream resilience than in well-armored stream channels. Combinations of higher system road density, poor road location, and unauthorized routes causing erosion and sedimentation have created concern for stream stability in five of the 7th-level watersheds in the project area. Degradation of water resources has been documented in site-specific locations, primarily as the result of road condition or motorized use**. Reviewers asked for more analysis and disclosure of how net sediment impacts were related to vegetation, transportation and travel management proposed projects; this information has been clarified in Chapters 1 and 3.**

[1] Available at
Wyoming State Forestry Division Fuels Mitigation

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) skirts the southwest boundary of the project area on 8 miles of designated motorized routes, and approximately 12 miles of nonmotorized foot and horse trail traverse the interior of the western project area. Comments during scoping and on the draft environmental impact statement requested additional clarity on how timber management in the vicinity of the CDNST contributes to the purpose and nature of the trail. The final environmental impact statement has been enhanced with information and images that show more clearly the extent of deadfall in forested trail segments and the degree to which deadfall complicates trail use and maintenance. The district and interdisciplinary team coordinated closely with the Forest Service Continental Divide National Scenic Trail administrator, regional landscape architect, and a national trail organization representative. Specific design criteria were developed to reduce adverse effects to the most practical degree, while clearing overhead hazards from the trail corridor in some forested trail segments. Additional information clarifies which trail segments would be affected. A substantial interference analysis has been included in the final environmental impact statement for the existing condition and proposed action.

Travel planning requirements according to the 2005 Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212) have not been completed for the North Savery project area. Analysis and reporting for Subpart A requirements were completed in 2015. The North Savery Project includes proposed actions to **complete and** implement Subparts A and B**. Subpart A designations are intended to identify the minimum road system necessary for sustainable access to National Forest System lands. There are currently 166 miles of National Forest System roads in the project area; the 2015 travel analysis process and travel analysis report (TAP/TAR) identified some as recommended for removal from the system. The current motor vehicle use map recognizes 112 miles of road open to public motorized travel. In addition, there are approximately 54 miles of unauthorized routes on which motorized travel is illegal and which are not included in the designated national forest road system. National Environmental Policy Act disclosure and decision making is needed to update the motor vehicle use map to reflect designation of roads open to sustainable public motorized travel.**

Background, Public Involvement, and Issues Raised

In August 2007, Brush Creek/Hayden District completed the Savery landscape-scale assessment to identify potential land management projects. Proposed actions were developed starting in 2008 and scoped with the public in 2010. The Savery project was delayed between 2011 and 2013 while Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests' personnel responded to the immediate hazards from the Rocky Mountain Region bark beetle epidemic. Timber and fuels program work resumed with an analysis and decision to implement the Bud project in 2013, which authorized actions in a portion of the original Savery area, and the Divide Peak project, which authorized prescribed burning in the area. The Bud project is now being implemented and is providing valuable lessons about timber salvage in beetle-killed stands. **Prescribed burning at Divide Peak is being implemented as fuel and weather conditions provide appropriate burn windows.**

In 2014, the Governor of Wyoming requested the North Savery area as a priority landscape for treatment due to impacts from insects and disease under the 2014 Farm Bill and the amended Healthy Forests Restoration Act. The Chief of the Forest Service designated it as a priority landscape on May 20, 2014. The interdisciplinary team used the northern portion of the original 2010 Savery proposal as a starting point for the North Savery Project. The 2015 proposed action released for public comment during scoping included **updates** from the 2010 proposal **to address increased fuels and overhead hazards from bark beetle-killed trees**.

The notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the North Savery Project was published in the Federal Register on December 1, 2015. The notice of intent asked for public comment on the proposal from December 1, 2015 to February 1, 2016. As part of the public involvement process, the agency published a detailed scoping document which was made available on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests' website in November 2015: (North Savery Project).

The Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District also held two public **scoping** meetings: one on December 9, 2015 at the Bureau of Land Management Rawlins Field Office in Rawlins, Wyoming and one on December 10, 2015 at the Platte Valley Community Center in Saratoga, Wyoming. A total of 30 individuals attended the meetings. In addition to public meetings, Forest Service personnel have engaged directly with affected individuals, other agencies, and local governments to discuss **collaboration specific to** this project and management of resources in the project area **in general.**

The interdisciplinary team considered three key issues from their analyses and public comments during scoping:

- **Scoping** Issue 1. Effects of proposed timber salvage treatments on wildlife, wildlife habitat, and watershed function may be significant and not consistent with the Forest Plan
- **Scoping** Issue 2. Effects of road closures and road decommissioning may have significant impacts on recreational access to the national forest
- **Scoping** Issue 3. Effects of proposed vegetation treatments adjacent to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail may not align with Congressional direction for management of national scenic trails

After reviewing the public **scoping** comments, the interdisciplinary team modified the proposed action to include hazard tree clearing on **maintenance** level 1 roads, more specific design criteria to protect the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, additional watershed-specific design criteria to mitigate cumulative effects, and minor changes to transportation system proposals.

The modified proposed action and environmental consequences were described in the North Savery draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). The draft environmental impact statement analyzing the modified proposed action was released for public review and comment on July 18, 2017. The Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District hosted a public meeting for the project at their Saratoga office on August 14, 2017. The 45-day draft environmental impact statement comment period ended September 12, 2017. Comments gathered at the public meeting and 11 submitted letters were evaluated to determine whether they contained unique, project-specific information that could be used to make factual corrections to this document, modify the proposed action, develop an additional alternative as outlined in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, improve environmental analysis, or some combination of these things. Changes and improvements to the final proposed action and final environmental impact statement reflect responsible comments. Comment summaries and responses are included in Appendix D (Response to Comments).

Comments on the draft environmental impact statement also provided additional clarity to the content and scope of issues carried forward into the final environmental impact statement for disclosure and decision-making.

- **Final** Issue 1. Effects of proposed timber salvage treatments **and associated temporary roads** on wildlife, wildlife habitat, and watershed function may be significant **but must remain** consistent with the Forest Plan. (**This issue was amended specifically to reflect public concern for the impact of temporary roads for timber access on other resources.)**
- **Final** Issue 2. **Designation of the minimum sustainable road system and decommissioning unsustainable roads must balance mitigating cumulative watershed effects with continuing to provide recreational access consistent with the recreation opportunity spectrum in the project area. (This issue was amended specifically to better reflect the necessity of improving watershed condition to improve resilience to natural events and management impacts.)**
- **Final** Issue 3. Effects of proposed vegetation treatments, **changes to the national forest road system and travel management decisions** adjacent to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail **must be consistent with Congressional intent and agency policy** for National Scenic Trails. (**This issue was amended specifically to reflect public concern for project impacts on the trail corridor and recreation experience around the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.)**

Alternatives

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act limits the range of alternatives to a maximum of three: no action, the proposed action, and, at most, one additional alternative, if that alternative is proposed during scoping or the collaborative process and meets the project purpose and need (HR 1904, Section 104). **Comments on the draft environmental impact statement included reiteration of alternatives suggested during scoping. The final environmental impact statement (Chapter 2) and response to comments (Appendix D) include additional discussion and evaluation of these topics.**

No-action Alternative

The no-action alternative represents the existing condition (baseline) and trend for resources in the project area. **If the no-action alternative is selected by the responsible official,** no additional timber harvest, salvage, silvicultural treatments, or changes to the existing designated road and motorized trail systems would be authorized or implemented to accomplish project goals. Additional National Environmental Policy Act analyses and decisions would be required in the future to implement any vegetation management or to designate the minimum road system as required by the 2005 Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212, Subpart A). **Even if the responsible official selects the proposed action, the decision may reflect that implementation would not be needed for all project activities, or portions thereof, included in the final proposed action. Other actions and activities previously authorized would continue to provide multiple uses in the project area. These continuing activities are disclosed in the "Cumulative Effects" section in Chapter 3.**

Final Proposed Action

The North Savery draft environmental impact statement analyzed the modified proposed action developed in response to issues and concerns raised during public scoping in 2015. The final proposed action includes additional changes in response to public and cooperator concerns, including disclosure and consideration of two alternatives based on suggestions from the public.

Further modifications to the proposed action were made between the draft environmental impact statement and this final environmental impact statement. Changes in the design and location of vegetation treatments and transportation system and travel management actions are incorporated to reflect public comment, agency collaboration, and continued environmental analysis have been incorporated. Travel management activities in the draft environmental impact statement modified proposed action were developed from the 2015 Travel Analysis Report for the district (2005 Travel Management Rule Subpart A), with some changes based on additional site specific conditions and access needs. Additional discussion has been added to the final environmental impact statement to clarify where the final proposed action deviates from the 2015 Travel Analysis Report (see Error! Reference source not found.). Because of improvements in the final proposed action, description and analysis for the draft environmental impact statement modified proposed action are incorporated by reference but not carried forward to this document.

Final Proposed Action

The **final** proposed action includes silvicultural treatments for timber and fuels management as well as road relocation, reconstruction, and restoration (see table 1 and table 2 below). Most of the proposed **forest treatment** activities would take place in Management Area 5.13 which emphasizes forest products and Management Area 5.12 which has a rangeland vegetation emphasis. No activities are proposed on State and private land in the project area or in Management Area 5.15 Forest Products, Ecological Maintenance and Restoration. **Fenceline clearing and one segment of road decommissioning in inventoried roadless areas have been cleared for the draft decision by the Rocky Mountain Regional Office.**

The final proposed action further refines the draft environmental impact statement modified proposed action by:

- **updating watershed protection design criteria to reflect updated vegetation conditions in the FSVeg database (2017 update);**
- **describing continuing coordination and collaboration around design criteria for the activities near the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail corridor;**
- **modifying the proposed transportation system to reflect needs for authorized access to adjacent State, private and public domain (Bureau of Land Management) lands;**
- **improving the proposals for retaining full-size vehicle access for managing livestock grazing infrastructure at the forest boundary; and**
- **utilizing new construction, existing non-system routes, and changed maintenance level on existing system roads to relocate the maintenance level 2 access road that provides access through the northwest portion of the project area.**

The elements of the final proposed action are displayed in table 1, table 2, and table 3. Please refer to Chapter 2 and Appendix D for more detailed information on how the final environmental impact statement responds to comments on the draft environmental impact statement and scoping comments from 2015.

The final environmental impact statement final proposed action is the agency preferred alternative.

Table 1. Timber harvest activities under the final environmental impact statement final proposed action and draft record of decision. This table has been updated.

Activity	Amount in Acres or Miles	Changes to Final Proposed Action
Salvage harvest	**5,466 to 5,816 acres**	**The final proposed action includes updates to improve implementation of design criteria for protecting specific watersheds from potential water yield increases. Identifying the range of harvest acres in vulnerable watersheds aligns design criteria more closely with uncertainty for equivalent clearcut area impacts and varying timber stand conditions observed in the project area.**
Precommercial thinning	**1,018 acres**	**Change from draft environmental impact statement 1035 to final environmental impact statement 1018 acres corrects an earlier mapping or math error.**
Temporary road construction and reclamation	24 miles	**No change from draft environmental impact statement modified proposed action. Approximate temporary road needs are based on maximum salvage harvest acres implemented.**
Clearing hazard trees	6.8 miles/**164 acres** fences 0.5/**12 acres** ditches 7.5 miles/**182 acres** maintenance level 1 roads	**No change in miles or acres from draft environmental impact statement modified proposed action; narrative will describe that implementation of these actions may be carried out in a variety of ways and would be coordinated with affected parties.**
Extra slash treatment to create fuel breaks	220 acres	**No change in acres from draft environmental impact statement modified proposed action; narrative will describe that these areas may be cleared and maintenance take place whether or not commercial harvest occurs in fuel break vicinity.**

Table 2. Transportation system changes under the final environmental impact statement final proposed action* and draft record of decision. This table has been updated.

Activity	Road Segment Length(s)	Changes to Final Proposed Action
Relocate existing system roads to reduce resource damage	**1.5**	**Road relocation includes both road construction and road decommissioning to move an existing road to a more sustainable location. The final proposed action includes newly constructed maintenance level 2 roads to relocate National Forest System Roads 448.1C, 452.1D, 803.1C, and 830.1B to more sustainable locations and provide through access for high-clearance motor vehicles. This description has been changed to more accurately reflect the original and new road relocation proposals.**
Add specific unauthorized routes to the designated open road system	**7.0**	**The final proposed action includes new addition of 0.80 miles of user-created route to the system as maintenance level 2 to relocate National Forest System Road 448.1C to maintain high-clearance vehicle access to Ranger Ditch, State, and Bureau of Land Management lands adjacent to northwest forest boundary. This increases road additions from 6.2 to 7.0.**

Activity	Road Segment Length(s)	Changes to Final Proposed Action
Changing road or route segments to off-highway vehicle trails	**0.0**	**The final proposed action does not include additions to the motorized trail system as originally proposed.**
Decommissioning roads adversely affecting watershed condition and wildlife habitats	**20.2**	**No changes to final environmental impact statement final proposed action.**

*The location and uses of 137 miles of National Forest System roads would not change.

Table 3. Travel management designation under the final environmental impact statement final proposed action* and draft record of decision. This table is new.

Activity	Road Segment Length(s)	Designations under the Final Proposed Action
2005 Travel Management Rule Subparts A and B: **A) Roads included in the designated minimum road system** **B) Roads designated OPEN to public motorized use; OPEN to all vehicles; travel off designated roads permitted up to 300 feet for purposes of dispersed camping or game retrieval.**	**A) 166 miles of National Forest System roads in North Savery area** **B) 94 miles roads designated OPEN for public motorized use.**	**A) The final proposed action and draft decision reflect a net change in National Forest System roads as follows: 166 miles (all maintenance levels, Forest Service system only), plus 7 miles additional roads and relocated roads, minus 21 miles decommissioned system roads = 152 miles, net reduction -14 miles. The starting value of 166 miles is 2.2 miles less than draft environmental impact statement which included some mileages of non-Forest Service jurisdiction roads in the national forest road system by error.** **B) The draft motor vehicle use map reflects a net change in roads open to public motorized use as follows: 112 miles of roads currently open to public motorized use, plus 7 miles additional roads and relocated roads, minus 21 miles decommissioned open roads, minus 2 miles non-Forest Service jurisdiction roads, minus 2 miles relocated roads, = 94 open miles, net reduction -18 miles. Effects analysis in Chapter 3 has been updated to reflect the final proposed action.**

*The location and uses of 137 miles of National Forest System roads would not change.

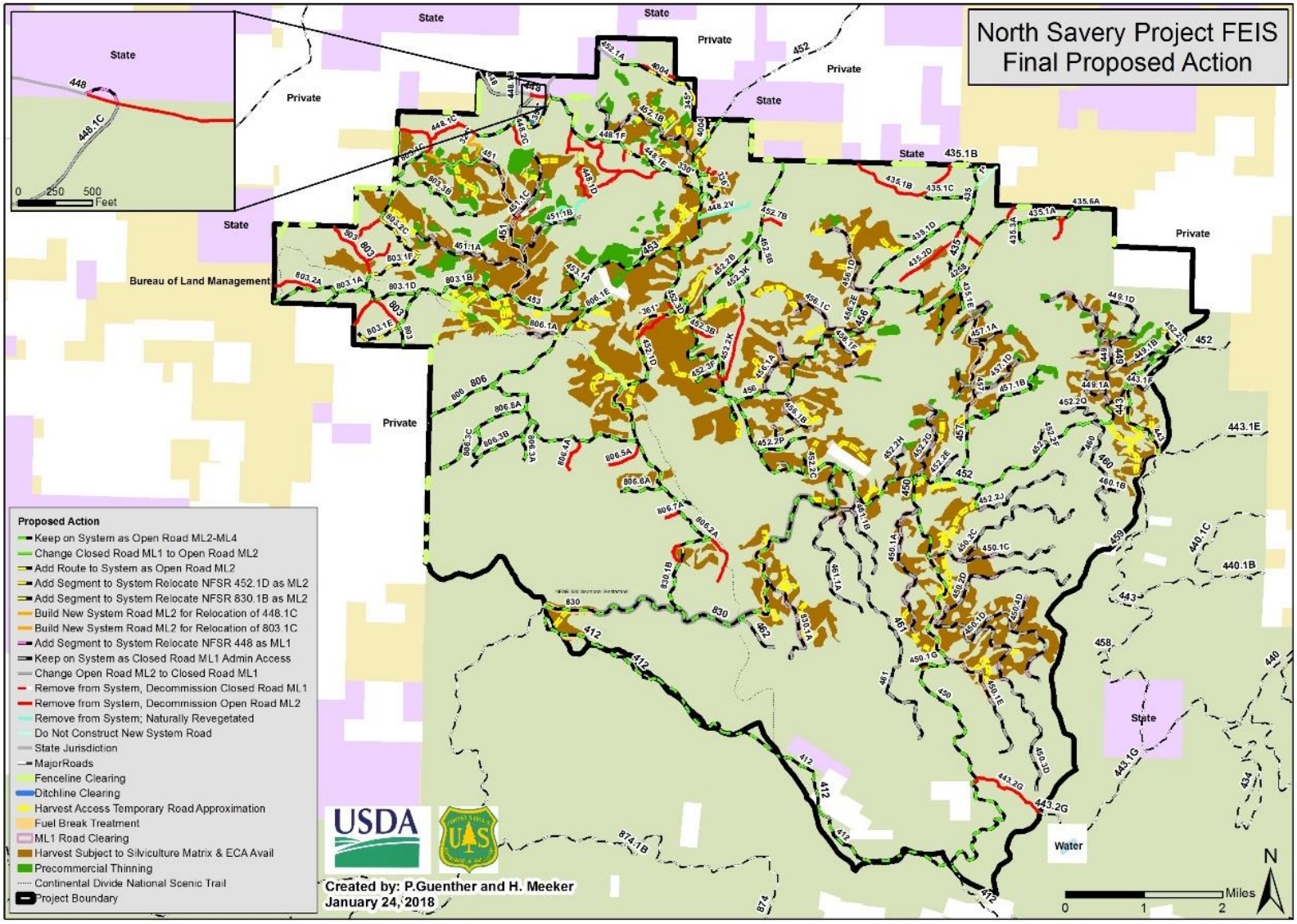

Figure 1. North Savery Project final proposed action overview map; see Chapter 2 for detailed display and description of proposed actions.

Major Conclusions

Management actions proposed for this project would have both beneficial and adverse effects on natural resources in the North Savery area. Vegetation treatments are intended to create desired conditions and would have significant beneficial effects on timber stands. Proposed actions for the transportation system are intended to retain forest access for recreation and land management and to mitigate adverse conditions in watersheds and wildlife habitats. Many adverse effects of these activities can be avoided through careful design (see design criteria starting on page Error! Bookmark not defined.**) and compliance with existing regulations.**

Table 4 has been updated to reflect changes in the final proposed action and effects analysis. The complete effects discussion is in Chapter 3, starting on page Error! Bookmark not defined.**.**

Table 4. Summary of key resource effects for the decision to be made: watershed conditions, wildlife habitat, and recreation experiences including scenery resources along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

Resource	Effects from the No-action Alternative	Effects from the Final Proposed Action
Stream stability	Existing resource damage associated with current system roads and user-created routes would continue and possibly get worse.	Long-term stability of streambeds and streambanks expected at all decommissioned road-stream crossings. Some stream channels at greater risk of instability from cumulative effects of North Savery and other actions in watersheds with degraded existing conditions.
Streamflow	**Past harvest, roads, fires, and the recent insect and disease epidemic have likely increased runoff and streamflow to a minor degree. May currently be causing minor increased erosion and stream habitat changes.**	Increases in runoff and peak flows expected in portions of the project area. Effects greater in watersheds with the most proposed harvest: North Fork Savery Creek, Nugget Creek, McLain Creek, Jack Creek, and North Spring Creek.
Erosion and sedimentation	No temporary roads, landings or skid trails, so no new erosion or additional compaction at these sites. Existing resource damage associated with current system roads and user-created routes would continue and possibly get worse. Some impacts from nonsystem routes would be reduced as these were decommissioned.	Increased erosion and sediment in streams from 7 miles of temporary roads located within stream connected disturbed areas, and from harvest units, landings, and skid trails. Reduced runoff, erosion, and sedimentation from road decommissioning or relocation of system roads. Adding **7 miles** of user-created routes would perpetuate the existing soil erosion and sedimentation at these sites unless maintenance was improved.
Canada lynx prey species	Habitat for, and abundance of, snowshoe hare and red squirrel (prey species) would decline for a period of time until hiding cover regenerates.	Proposed timber management would retain recruitment trees, snags, and coarse woody debris to contribute toward prey habitat in the future. **USFWS consultation is complete.**

Resource	Effects from the No-action Alternative	Effects from the Final Proposed Action
Pygmy shrew, American marten, northern goshawk, greater sage-grouse, boreal owl, olive-sided flycatcher, Brewer's sparrow, hoary bat, Hudsonian emerald, and western bumble bee	Decommissioning unauthorized routes would restore minor amounts of habitat. Coarse woody debris from beetle-killed trees would provide habitat for pygmy shrew and American marten.	Decommissioning existing system roads would restore additional minor amounts of habitat. Habitat removed by timber harvest would be lost to beetle kill if no harvest occurred. Some disturbance to pygmy shrews, greater sage-grouse, and Hudsonian emeralds from harvest activities.
Brown creeper, snowshoe hare, American three-toed woodpecker, golden-crowned kinglet, Lincoln's warbler, Wilson's warbler	Decommissioning unauthorized routes would restore minor amounts of habitat. This would likely improve territory quality for a few individuals. Beetle-killed stands would become unsuitable habitat for brown creeper and golden-crowned kinglet. Over time, snags from beetle-killed trees would provide communal winter roost sites for golden-crowned kinglets.	Decommissioning existing system roads would restore additional minor amounts of habitat. Brown creeper and snowshoe hare habitat removed by timber harvest would be lost to beetle kill if no harvest occurred. Forest Plan standards for recruitment trees, snags, and coarse woody debris would retain some future habitat for prey insects in harvested areas. Some displacement of snowshoe hares from harvest areas during activities.
Continental Divide National Scenic Trail	Falling trees and downed trees make **maintaining and** navigating the trail difficult and more hazardous than usual. Existing scenic integrity objectives for the 14 miles of trail in the project area are high to very high. Scenic integrity objectives do not evaluate natural changes to landscape; **existing conditions do not meet high to very high objectives because of dead trees.**	Tree removal along the trail would improve navigation, safety and maintenance. Managed areas along the trail would be unlikely to meet scenic integrity objectives of high to very high for **1 to 7** years after harvest. Scenic integrity would improve over time as understory vegetation obscured the evidence of timber salvage.

Decision to be Made

Based upon the effects of **the final proposed action, cooperating agency input, and public comments on the alternatives**, the responsible official will decide whether to:

- implement any or all of the silvicultural and hazardous fuels reduction treatments proposed;
- salvage timber from harvest units up to the maximum acres determined by design criteria;
- allow construction of temporary roads to access vegetation treatments;
- add unauthorized routes to the transportation system to maintain motorized public access in some portions of the project area, including bringing those routes to engineered road standards;
- relocate certain roads to more sustainable locations to maintain public access in the project area, **including changing maintenance levels and constructing short segments of new connector roads to accommodate public use;**
- remove certain roads from the system network to reduce road density and associated resource impacts so that cumulative effects from vegetation management are minimized;
- **authorize decommissioning or physical restoration of certain roads and nonsystem routes**; and
- **designate the minimum road system and roads open for public motorized use under the 2005 Travel Rule Subparts A and B.**

Unauthorized routes are not part of the national forest road system and no decision is needed to obliterate and restore unauthorized routes. However, the final environmental impact statement includes effects analysis and disclosure for the methods believed best to physically restore the natural condition of those route locations as actions connected to this project. The effects of physical obliteration of unauthorized routes is included in the effects analysis for the no-action alternative and final proposed actions as these activities are conducted under a variety of recurring resource programs including watershed, wildlife, and recreation improvement or restoration programs.

End